

## **We Do Okay** by [twowritehands](#)

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**Summary:**

After four years, Jonathan is back in Hawkins. Steve and Nancy never left.

# **We Do Okay**

## **Author's Note:**

I have read tons of triad but have never written it before now!

## **1987 Hawkins, Indiana**

Jonathan emerges from the woods with a large pack on his back, old camera swinging from his neck, a rifle hanging from his shoulder. He has a week old beard, hair down to his shoulders, kept in his face to better hide the ugly scar there.

He checks his watch and heads towards the old trailer by the lake. The chief used to live here, before he married Jonathan's mom and moved in with her. Nancy and Steve Harrington rent this place from Jim now, or so he has been told. They had still been living in her parent's basement when Jonathan went off to NYU.

Both of their cars are in the driveway. He can hear little feet tearing from one end of the house to the other, loud voices holding conversation over the racket of a TV.

Maybe he shouldn't be here, Jonathan thinks. But his fist lifts and knocks on the door anyway. The TV volume decreases considerably and Steve answers. He is wearing business casual with his thick hair as immaculate as ever. There is a brief moment of polite confusion on his face.

Jonathan offers a tentative grin, which is mostly lost in his whiskers. But those dark glittering eyes are unmistakable.

Steve's face breaks into a huge grin. "JONNY!"

Nancy gasps from the kitchen. "Oh my god! Its you! You're back! Come in! Sit down!"

He unloads the heavy pack and the gun, but lifts the camera to his face to get shots of the little girl who comes prancing into the room, lost in her games. Jonathan gets several of her true bearing before

she squeaks like a mouse and runs away, bashful as all get out.

"Whoa, hey, you're like a quick shot with that thing!" Steve praises.

"Have to be to get the demogorgon." He gives the tired mother a smile, "She's so big now."

"She's almost four now," Nancy says with a jut of her lip. "She's growing so fast!"

"I think I might have got some good ones for you."

"Thanks," Nancy says, and the way she tucks a strand of hair behind her ear is the Nancy Jonathan remembers. And so is that smile. "She's so camera shy I hardly have any!"

Jonathan's finger twitches on the button. He lifts the camera again. "One of you guys?"

Nancy resists, shielding her face and hair but Steve and Jonathan both insist she is beautiful. Steve puts his arms around her and kisses her and gives her bunny ears. Jonathan takes several shots before sitting on the couch. He flicks his hair out of his face and Steve leans closer with a low whistle. "Damn. I forgot how gruesome that one is."

Jonathan lets his hair fall back over the gash he'd gotten on the group's monster hunting expedition, the summer before he left. He doesn't mind the scar; better he than Nancy--and the unknown baby in her stomach.

The past folds back away from the moment as Nancy serves cans of cold coca-cola and sits on his other side. He is now sandwiched by the young Harringtons.

Jonathan's heartbeat quickens and he suddenly can't think of anything to say. The only thing that comes to mind is theoretical physics, and his findings over the last week spent surveying the known portal sites.

"We heard you were back last week, we thought you'd forgotten about us." Steve says, cutting straight to the point. Jonathan blushes. Nancy hits her husband on the arm.

Jonathan sips and chokes on the sharp sting of carbonation; he is more of a tea person. "I uh, I went straight out to the Sites, to get some proper readings and data."

"That's what your mom told us," Nancy assures, with a deadly glare at Steve, "we knew you'd stop by."

"So you're a scientist now," Steve sounds proud and excited. Jonathan wonders if he realizes that the title so far just means a lot of books and papers, hardly different than insurance salesmen. "What do we call you?"

"Nothing special until after I get my phd. I'm still working on my masters."

Nancy holds her chin, grinning like a cherub. "Wow," she says, her eyes wide with happiness. "You're actually doing it. Dr. Byers. It suits you."

"In a mad scientist kind of way," Steve teases, with a wink. The young parents trade a look of significance that Jonathan doesn't understand.

"Barbie," Steve calls, "come say hello to Uncle Jon!"

The little girl creeps from the hallway shyly. Jonathan tries to appear nonthreatening, even though he is aware that he looks a little rough around the edges after a week in the woods. His hands naturally pick up the camera.

"Remember me?"

She dunks behind the lazy boy. Steve hauls her out and blows a raspberry on her belly. "You remember Jon. He's mommy and daddy's best friend."

"Hi " she says, timidly.

Jonathan gets a close look at her and sees his own mother's eyes looking back at him. He loses his breath. His eyes cut to Steve whose brows are pinched in an anxious don't-freak-out way. Jonathan glances at Nancy, who rubs his back but keeps a casual, happy voice, "Barbie is an artist. Do you want to show Jon the paintings you

made?"

He spends twenty minutes praising the girl for water colors that if anything shows a steady hand for a toddler. He is impressed, but in a numb way. He is in shock, but after a lifetime of praising Will's drawings, the words come easily. The little girl relaxes right in front of his eyes and tells the story of her favorite paintings, which is really just when and where she painted it.

Jonathan gently coaxes her into posing with the art--Nancy and Steve holding their breath and hiding their grins because the girl NEVER stands for a picture EVER. Then because his throat is closing he excuses himself and goes out onto the deck.

The sun is setting. The trees are a black line against orange sherbet and cream. The greenish lake is like a giant peice of sea glass. A bug zapper by the door buzzes at random intervals.

After a quiet moment alone, Steve comes out and stands next to him without a word. Jonathan feels anger lick up his throat like fire. He grips the old unpainted railing. "You said the DNA tests--"

"Jon, we HAD to say that! Your scholarship--"

"Screw my scholarship! That's--" he lowers his voice and it shakes, "that's my daughter!"

"That's our daughter," Steve corrects.

"You should have told me, man."

"Why? So you'd stay and work at the movie theater forever? You talked about monsters and extra demensions and studying science at NYU constantly. You have a dream, man, and we weren't about to let you cop out."

"Cop out? I have a responsibility HERE not in New York! I can't believe you--you--LIARS! You let me go off--i have a-a kid and I don't even KNOW her..."

Steve's face flickers with guilt. "You didn't know," he promises. "It doesn't make you like Lonnie."

Jonathan's jaw pulses. "Actually that makes me exactly like him."

A beat of silence, Steve looks tremendously like a deer in headlights. Then grips the back of Jonathan's neck. "Listen to me. One of us had to get out of this goddamn town. You had the best shot."

"Don't give me that bullshit. You were accepted to Dartmouth, Nancy was going to Brown."

"And our parents spent the money on a shotgun wedding and baby clothes instead. My grandpa gave me a job with benefits. Nancy is part time at the library. Barb wants for nothing."

"And you don't think I could have done half as well for them, is that what you're saying?"

"Jon, NO," Steve hugs him tight, fighting Jonathan's weak attempts to break away. Mouth pressed into his shoulder, Steve says, "me and Nancy never dreamed of more than a house and kids. You did. We couldn't take that away from you. Do you get that?"

The door opens and Nancy steps out, shuts it tight behind her. "She's in bed."

The men step apart. Steve pushes a hand through his hair, but it remains perfect.

"He's pissed, Nance."

Nancy sighs, shoulders dropped forward, head tilted back. "It was my decision. Don't be mad at Steve."

"How could you do this to me?"

"I was afraid, okay?"

A staring contest. She sets her jaw forward. The anger flickers. Jonathan inhales. "Yeah, I get that. You were afraid to confess you were so easy; you pretended your first ever boyfriend proposed before he knocked you up!"

"Hey, man," Steve warns as Nancy gasps and slaps him. Jonathan falls

back a step and pushes his hair out of his face. Steve gets between them, hand on Jonathan's shoulder. "You're mad. We get that. But don't say what you don't mean."

"Sure, I mean it," he says lowly. As soon as the words slip over his tongue and her blue eyes shutter with pain, his anger swaps out for guilt. He has succeeded in hurting the one who hurt him but now he only feels worse.

With a hand on him, perhaps Steve feels the tension leave Jonathan's body. In any case, he moves his touch to the side of Jonathan's face, thumb sweeping the scar lightly. "Hey, hey," he says, "it's okay, we get it, Jon. We get it."

Jonathan shudders and blinks stinging eyes. "I didn't want to be anything like him."

Steve kisses the 'm' of the last word on Jonathan's lips. The lopsided curl of amusement that twists the young husband's mouth is from the surprising texture of beard. Steve jumps his eyebrows in approval.

Nancy puts herself under Jonathan's right arm, where she fits like a glove between both men. "You're not," she promises Jonathan, arms squeezing with the strength of motherhood. "You're becoming a doctor of physics. That's huge. That's the kind of role model a child needs. That's the kind of person Hawkins needs.... The kind of man we want," she adds demurely.

The old rush rises through Jonathan's chest, elbowing his lungs and heart. How do these two always get under his skin?

"You might have been in New York," Steve says, "But you were here too. Everyday."

Jonathan's eyes flood and he laughs as the tears seep into his beard. "I missed you guys so much. I--I thought...." he sniffs. "I thought I was supposed to move on but I just, I couldn't. I've never stopped loving you. Never stopped feeling tied back here."

"Subconsciously, you knew," Steve says. Jonathan actually has theories to the contrary, but he will need to do far more research

before he can write up a paper on the active force between parent and child.

"I just left most of myself behind," he whispers against Nancy's crown. He cuts his eyes to Steve who wraps them both up in his long arms. Jonathan laughs. "We have a baby!"

### **Author's Note:**

Abrupt ending idk

I can prolly come up with more if interest is high enough but for now I'd like to leave it as a short glimpse into the future

The idea came from the panning shot of everyone sitting in the hospital waiting room, and Steve is sitting with The Dads lol